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W.M. (44)

71st Conclusions.

WAR CABINET 71 (44).

*CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the War Cabinet held at 10 Downing Street,
S.W.1, on Thursday, 1st June, 1944, at 12 noon.*

Present:

The Right Hon. WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, M.P., Prime Minister (<i>in the Chair</i>).	The Right Hon. ANTHONY EDEN, M.P., Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
The Right Hon. C. R. ATTLEE, M.P., Lord President of the Council.	
The Right Hon. Sir JOHN ANDERSON, M.P., Chancellor of the Exchequer.	The Right Hon. ERNEST BEVIN, M.P., Minister of Labour and National Service.

The Right Hon. OLIVER LYTTELTON, M.P., Minister of Production.	The Right Hon. LORD WOOLTON, Minister of Reconstruction.
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The following were also present:

Field-Marshal the Right Hon. J. C. SMUTS, M.P., Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa.	The Right Hon. LORD BEAVERBROOK, Lord Privy Seal.
The Right Hon. Sir ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR, Bt., M.P., Secretary of State for Air.	The Right Hon. Sir STAFFORD CRIPPS, K.C., M.P., Minister of Aircraft Production.
The Right Hon. BRENDAN BRACKEN, M.P., Minister of Information.	The Right Hon. LORD CHERWELL, Paymaster-General.
The Right Hon. Sir DONALD SOMERVELL, K.C., M.P., Attorney-General.	The Hon. Sir ALEXANDER CADOGAN, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Sir ALEXANDER MAXWELL, Permanent Under-Secretary of State, Home Office (*Items 4-6*).

Secretariat:

Sir EDWARD BRIDGES.
Mr. W. S. MURRIS.

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Foreign Affairs.**Colonel Beck.**

1. *The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs* informed the War Cabinet that since the occupation of Poland, Colonel Beck had been living in Roumania under close supervision. He was now seriously ill. The Polish Government had informed us that there was a chance that his friends might be able to arrange for his escape from Roumania to Turkey; and that the Turkish Government, although unwilling to give him refuge in Turkish territory, were prepared to arrange for his transit through Turkey, if His Majesty's Government agreed to give him refuge.

Colonel Beck had been the Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs with whom the Anglo-Polish Alliance was negotiated in 1939. He had proved himself to be a loyal ally, and, since the occupation of Poland, his conduct had not been in any way open to criticism. There was no doubt, however, that the Soviet Government regarded him as a symbol of all that they most disliked and distrusted in Polish policy before the war.

It was pointed out in discussion that Colonel Beck's earlier record had been far from good; and that he had been involved in the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia in 1938. If His Majesty's Government agreed to the request without consultation with the Soviet Government they would arouse the suspicions of the Soviet Government. On the other hand, if His Majesty's Government informed the Soviet Government that the Polish Government were interesting themselves in the fate of Colonel Beck, the result would be detrimental to relations between the Polish and Soviet Governments.

The War Cabinet—

- (1) Invited the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to try to persuade the Polish Government to withdraw their request that refuge should be provided for Colonel Beck in British territory.
- (2) Agreed that, if the Polish Government pressed their request, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs should, without indicating that the Polish Government were involved, inform the Soviet Government that it had been suggested that His Majesty's Government should provide refuge for Colonel Beck in British territory and invite their views.

Yugoslavia.

(Previous
Reference:
W.M.(44)67th
Conclusions,
Minute 2.)

2. *The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs* said that no Serb was willing to join the new Government which King Peter was in process of forming unless His Majesty's Government would give an undertaking to support General Mihailovitch. This condition was, of course, unacceptable, and King Peter had accordingly invited the Ban of Croatia to proceed with the formation of a Government without the support of the Serbs. The necessary documents were being signed, and a declaration by King Peter on the lines which we had suggested would be published to-day. The aim of the new Government would be to co-operate with all genuine resistance movements, and it was intended that the Ban of Croatia should go to Bari in order to establish contact with Marshal Tito. Recent information showed that Marshal Tito and the British Mission with him had eluded the efforts of the enemy to capture them.

The Prime Minister said that steps should be taken to make suitable provision at Bari for the reception and accommodation of the Ban of Croatia.

The War Cabinet—

- (1) Took note of the statement made by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
- (2) Invited the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to communicate with the appropriate authorities in Italy with a view to ensuring that suitable provision was made for the reception and accommodation of the Ban of Croatia at Bari.

Jewish Refugees.

(Previous Reference:
W.M. (43)16th Conclusions,
Minute 6.)

3. *The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs* said that the High Commissioner, Jerusalem, had been approached by the Jewish Agency about a proposal made by the Gestapo for the transfer of Jews now in Yugoslavia, Roumania, Czechoslovakia and Poland. It was stated that the German Government would be willing to evacuate a million Jews from those countries to Spain and Portugal in return for the delivery of ten thousand motor lorries and certain quantities of coffee, tea, cocoa and soap. There was a threat that if the offer was not accepted there would be further wholesale massacres of Jews.

It was clear that the proposal was simply designed to embarrass the Allied Governments in prosecution of the war, and the Committee on the Reception and Accommodation of Refugees, who had considered the offer on the previous day, were satisfied that His Majesty's Government could not possibly accept it.

The Committee had also suggested that in intimating their decision, which would be conveyed through the Protecting Power, His Majesty's Government should make it clear that they would do what they could to provide for any small numbers of Jews whom the German Government might be prepared to release and who might be transferred without interference with military operations.

He proposed to communicate with the United States Government in this sense, and would send a copy of his telegram to his colleagues for their information.

The War Cabinet—

Took note, with approval, of the course of action proposed by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

United States Forces in Great Britain.

Allegations made by Mr. Kendall, M.P.

4. On the 25th May, Mr. Kendall, M.P., had made serious allegations in a Parliamentary Question about the conduct of United States troops in Grantham. These charges had been formally denied by Lord Brownlow, Lord Lieutenant of Lincolnshire, by the Mayor of Grantham and by the Watch Committee. A report indicating that they were unjustified had been sent to the Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security by the Chief Constable of Grantham.

The War Cabinet now were informed that a letter had been received stating that Mr. Kendall proposed to hold a meeting on the following day in order to discuss the charges which he had made about the conduct of United States Forces in Grantham. It was represented that such a meeting would be most detrimental to relations with the United States Forces, and that it would be deplorable if wide publicity were to be given to charges of this kind at this juncture.

The War Cabinet was informed that the meeting took the form of an invitation to 20 or 30 leading citizens to attend luncheon and to hear certain statements regarding the conduct of American troops. The building in which the meeting was to be held was not, as had been alleged, a "protected place." Moreover, it was clear that no action could be taken to prohibit the meeting under Defence Regulation 39E.

The War Cabinet—

Decided that in the circumstances the best course was that all possible action should be taken to prevent publicity being given to Mr. Kendall's allegations. The Minister of Information was asked to approach the Press in this sense.

The Dufour Case.

5. The War Cabinet had before them a Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (W.P. (44) 286) about the Dufour case. M. Dufour, a French national, had instituted civil proceedings against General de Gaulle, Colonel Passy and six others, alleging, *inter alia*, maltreatment and claiming damages. If the case came on in the courts the allegations would certainly be given considerable prominence. A written defence had been put in in the usual form denying the charges, but no further action had been taken by the defendants. It seemed that General de Gaulle considered it beneath his dignity to defend himself against the charges and felt that it was the responsibility of His Majesty's Government to prevent the case being brought. He adhered to this attitude, notwithstanding the fact that it had been made clear to both sides that His Majesty's Government had neither the power nor the wish to interfere with the course of justice.

In the course of discussion, the position of General de Gaulle as regards diplomatic immunity was mentioned. It was not altogether clear whether this point had been explored. It seemed probable that His Majesty's Government could confer diplomatic immunity on General de Gaulle, and if he was prepared to plead it the result would be that the case would proceed against the subordinates who, presumably, were really responsible for the alleged maltreatment.

In that event, judgment against the defendants would not involve General de Gaulle, with all the unfortunate consequences which would follow therefrom. It was agreed that this aspect of the matter should be further examined, and that it should also be considered whether any action could properly be taken to postpone the hearing of this case.

The War Cabinet—

Invited the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Attorney-General and a representative of the Home Office to examine the matter further on the lines indicated in discussion.

France.
(Previous Reference:
W.M.(44)70th
Conclusions,
Minute 5.)

6. The War Cabinet had a further discussion about General de Gaulle's visit to this country. A record of the discussion is contained in the Secretary's Standard File of War Cabinet Conclusions.

*Offices of the War Cabinet, S.W. 1,
1st June, 1944.*